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DCI Talking Points

SE Asian reaction to escalation of military hardware in the region

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In short term:

- Undecided ASEAN countries likely will choose F16 over F20.
- Some effort to expedite delivery of F16 also may occur.

Over longer term:

- ASEAN countries can be expected to display increasing concern as Chinese military modernization continues, in same way they heretofore have expressed concern about a rearmed Japan.
- They will cite PRC as ultimate threat to the area (read here ASEAN's freedom of action).
- Initially ASEAN will press Washington to provide assurances that US will remain a guarantor of their independence.
- Also, albeit at a low level, ASEAN countries will talk about and possibly take some action to improve relations with the Soviets, as a counter to PRC hegemony. This trend probably will accelerate if US is perceived to be lowering its presence in the area.

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